

State Loan Repayment Program - Continuation Award

INTRODUCTION

Continuation awards are an opportunity for clinicians to remain in the State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) for an additional year of service at the site listed on the contract once their initial contract has been completed. Continuation awards are dependent upon the clinician's current year of service, outstanding educational loan balances, and the availability of funds. The clinician must have satisfied their service obligation and continue to meet SLRP program eligibility requirements. If the community representative fails to complete the North Dakota Department of Health's (NDDoH) annual verification form, they risk not being an eligible site for providers to receive a continuation award.

Continuation contract applications may be submitted during the current contract period. By extending the contract, the clinician commits to an additional year of service at the practice site listed on the contract for repayment of qualifying outstanding educational loans. As part of the application process, the clinician must provide documentation that all previous loan repayment award funds have been applied to reduce their qualifying educational loans. Maximum continuation award amounts are displayed in Table 1. Awards are contingent upon available funds each year, and on the clinician's current outstanding qualifying loan balances. A separate continuation award application and Community Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) must be completed for each year of additional service requested. There is no guarantee that the clinician will receive a continuation contract for continued participation in the program beyond the initial contract. Loan repayment awards are exempt from federal income and employment taxes. These funds are not included as wages when determining benefits under the Social Security Act.

SLRP CONTINUATION SERVICE OPTIONS

The SLRP continuation contract will provide funds to clinicians to repay their outstanding qualifying education that includes a 1:1 community match. Program service options include:

- 1) Full-Time Clinical Practice: The SLRP will pay up to \$20,000* for the first additional year of full-time clinical practice defined as no less than 40 hours per week for a minimum of 45 weeks per year.
- 2) Part-Time Clinical Practice: The SLRP will pay up to \$10,000 for the first additional year of part-time clinical practice defined as no less than 20 hours per week for a minimum of 45 weeks per year.

*The SLRP (federal fund and community match) will pay the remaining balance of a previously approved and qualifying educational loan if the outstanding balance is less than the maximum award amount listed in Table 1. The community organization must agree to a 1:1 match.

Table 1: Award Amounts

Year of Service	Full-Time – Total Amount	Part-Time-Total Amount
3 rd year of SLRP Service	\$20,000	\$10,000
4 th year of SLRP Service	\$20,000	\$10,000
5 th year of SLRP Service	\$10,000	\$5,000

SLRP CONTINUATION CONTRACT APPLICATION PROCESS

Notification must be sent to the NDDoH via email if a clinician would like to submit a continuation application. Application cycles are based on the clinician's current contract end date and must be submitted during the appropriate application cycle that corresponds to their current contract end date. Applications that are not submitted within the current contract period will not be considered.

Eligibility Requirements:

To remain eligible for loan repayment and receive a continuation contract, clinicians must:

- 1) continue working at the approved practice site listed on their contracts;
- 2) remain in compliance with service;
- 3) apply all previous loan repayment award funds to the reduction of qualifying educational loans approved by the State Health Council and provide a payment history with the new continuation application;
- 4) not have any judgment liens arising from federal debt;
- 5) not be excluded, debarred, suspended, or disqualified by a federal agency; and
- 6) submit a complete application.

Selection Factors:

Clinicians under SLRP contract who fail to comply with program and service requirements outlined in their current contract will not be selected for a Continuation Contract. The following factors, if not addressed, will be considered a breach of the SLRP contract and may result in being placed in default.

- 1) *Failure to Complete Surveys:* If the site representative or clinician fails to complete the annual verification survey, the clinician may not qualify for a Continuation Contract.
- 2) *Unauthorized Conversion to Half-Time:* If a clinician converts from a full-time to half-time schedule without first requesting a conversion and obtaining the NDDoH's approval, the clinician may be considered as unqualified for a Continuation Contract.
- 3) *Unauthorized Site Change:* A clinician's failure to alert the NDDoH that they have left or are going to leave the approved sites may disqualify the clinician for a Continuation Contract. Clinicians may be considered as unqualified for a Continuation Contract if they leave the approved site of record without notifying the NDDoH in advance of the departure.
- 4) *Unauthorized Transfers:* Clinicians who transfer to another site prior to obtaining NDDoH approval may be considered as unqualified for a Continuation Contract.
- 5) *Failure to Abide by Service Requirements:* Clinicians who fail to disclose information regarding their service that impacts the terms and conditions of their current contract (e.g., working at an additional site) or fail to submit documentation for service requests in a timely manner, may be considered as unqualified for a Continuation Contract.

- 6) *Excessive Absences:* Clinicians with absences in excess of 35 work days per service year, without a documented medical, personal, or otherwise substantiated reason may not qualify for a Continuation Contract.

Withdrawing Your Application

Continuation contract applications can be withdrawn by the clinician any time before a contract is signed. To withdraw the application, the clinician must contact the NDDoH.